

# Town going up for Grafenwöhr

**GRAFENWÖHR, Germany** — So many U.S. military family members will be moving into the Grafenwöhr area in the next few years that the Army is building them their own town.

And while all the homes will have the same interiors, they won't look the same from the outside.

Zapf construction chief Ottmar Mahr, who supervises hundreds of workers building the new town, said there are 11 house designs, featuring floor plans ranging from 1,300 to 1,900 square feet.

“That is larger than the average German family home,” he said, adding that houses will be allocated based on family size. The smallest house is the “Virginia,” while the largest house is the “California,” Mahr said.

Under German law, the houses at Netzaberg cannot all be the same design and that is desirable to avoid a “ghetto look,” he said.



The California model is the largest home model being built in the Netzaberg housing project



Aerial view of the ongoing construction of the Netzaberg housing project

The houses include three- and four-bedroom units. Four out of five are duplexes, but there are also some row houses — such as the “Georgia” — which houses three families side by side, he said. Family size, not rank, will be used as the basis for allocating the units, he said.

U.S. Army Europe officials have yet to announce which military units will move to Grafenwöhr this summer, but the community can expect 800 to 1,000 new troops each year for the next few years, according to Lt. Col. Elizabeth Hibner, a USAREUR spokeswoman.

A \$1 billion construction project will see the Grafenwöhr military community expand from a 1,000-soldier garrison with 2,000 military family members to a brigade-size community with 4,500 active-duty soldiers and 7,000 family members by 2008.

Many of the new arrivals will live in Netzaberg, next to Grafenwöhr’s main post.

The houses are made of precast concrete and look similar to modern German homes off post.

According to Mahr, Netzaberg eventually will comprise of 830 houses, with workers already completing 400 basements. Some 280 houses are in various stages of above-ground construction, he said.

The new town will include 12 neighborhoods. The first neighborhood to be completed, known as East 1, is the closest to the Grafenwöhr training area and will be ready for its first inhabitants by May. Landscaping in the neighborhood is under way with plants expected to go in before spring, Mahr said.

Last Friday, workers toiled inside and outside the homes in East 1, installing kitchens, laying floors and marking out driveways.

Netzaberg’s five eastern neighborhoods will contain 394 houses. After East 1, additional neighborhoods will be completed in July, August, September and October, Mahr said. Construction has started on time in three North West neighborhoods that will comprise 160 houses, he said, and a road has been completed linking four Western neighborhoods that will include 280 houses.

Zapf technical project manager Friedrich Meyer said the lack of significant winter weather so far this year has helped the project race ahead.

“We have only had one week of construction stopped because of cold temperatures,” he said.



The Virginia model is the smallest home model being built in the Netzaberg housing project

In addition, there have been no delays to internal construction and many houses are already gas heated, Meyer said.

Currently, there are about 350 workers on site each day, he said, with the work force expected to reach a maximum of 600 to 700 workers by May.

By Seth Robson  
Stars and Stripes

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